

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 ACDA-19 SAJ-01 EB-11 TRSE-00

PM-07 L-03 NSC-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

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P R 021645Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3483

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 2189

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, NL

SUBJ: COMMENT OF PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL'S SECRETARY GENERAL  
ON NETHERLANDS DEFENSE WHITE PAPER

1. SUMMARY: DURING CALL BE CHARGE ON MAY 2, DR. RINGNALDA, SECRETARY GENERAL OF PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL'S OFFICE, SAID COUNCIL OF MINISTERS HAD AT SPECIAL EVENING MEETING ON APRIL 29 REJECTED MINISTRY OF DEFENSE'S PRELIMINARY DRAFT WHITE PAPER ON GROUNDS THAT OVERALL LEVEL OF EXPENDITURE DURING PROJECTED 4-5 YEAR PERIOD WAS TOO HIGH. MOD VREDELING HAD BEEN DIRECTED TO REVISE PAPER AND COME BACK WITH LOWER BUDGETARY ESTIMATES, A PROCESS WHICH RINGNALDA SAID WOULD TAKE SEVERAL WEEKS. IN THE MEANTIME, THERE COULD BE SOME INITIAL CONTACT WITH NATO ON MAJOR FEATURES OF THE DRAFT PAPER. END SUMMARY.

2. RINGNALDA SAID ONE OF THE PROBLEMS IN SECURING CABINET APPROVAL OF THE SUBSTANTIAL BUDGETARY COMMITMENT BUILT INTO THE WHITE PAPER WAS THE RAPIDLY DIMINISHING POPULAR SUPPORT FOR NATO IN THE  
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NETHERLANDS. RINGNALDA DECLARED THAT ONLY A FEW YEARS AGO PUBLIC

OPINION POLLS SHOWED THAT 80 PERCENT OF THE DUTCH SUPPORTED NATO. CURRENTLY, THAT FIGURE WAS NO HIGHER THAN 60 PERCENT AND THE DOWNWARD TREND WAS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE. RINGNALDA INDICATED THAT PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL WATCHED THESE POLLS CAREFULLY AND WAS INFLUENCED BY THEM.

3. RINGNALDA CONFIRMED REPORTS FROM SEVERAL SOURCES THAT DEVELOPMENT AID MINISTER PRONK WAS EXPRESSING HIS UNHAPPINESS WITH SEVERAL ASPECTS OF FONMIN VAN DER STOEL'S POLICY. RINGNALDA DID NOT RPT NOT DENY THAT PRONK WAS AMONG THOSE IN CABINET WHO HAD LED THE ATTACK ON VREDELING'S WHITE PAPER. RINGNALDA DID NOT CONCEAL HIS LACK OF SYMPATHY FOR PRONK'S GRANDIOSE AMBITIONS FOR AN EVER-LARGER DEVELOPMENT AID BUDGET. IN RINGNALDA'S VIEW, PRONK IS SOMETHING OF A "SOCIALIST ILLUSIONIST" IN HIS CONVICTION THAT THE PROBLEMS OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD CAN BE SOLVED BY MASSIVE INFUSIONS OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM THE OUTSIDE. AT THE SAME TIME, RINGNALDA EMPHASIZED THAT NO ONE SHOULD UNDERESTIMATE PRONK'S BRAIN POWER, DETERMINATION AND APPEAL TO THE LEFT WING OF HIS OWN PARTY AND RADICAL LEFTISTS IN GENERAL. RINGNALDA WOULD NOT BE DRAWN OUT ON WHAT PART THE PRIME MINISTER HAD PLAYED IN THE DELIBERATIONS ON THE WHITE PAPER LEADING TO ITS REJECTION AT THE SPECIAL CABINET MEETING.

4. RINGNALDA MADE ONE OR TWO OBLIQUE COMMENTS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE SITUATION IN WHICH VREDELING HAD BEEN PLACED COULD NOT CONTINUE INDEFINITELY. HOWEVER, RINGNALDA DISCREETLY GAVE NO INDICATION THAT A CABINET SPILT MIGHT BE BREWING, A SUBJECT COVERED IN SOME DETAIL IN A SEPTEL.

5. CHARGE EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER ANY SUBSTANTIAL CUT IN LEVEL OF GON DEFENSE EXPENDITURES IN COMING YEARS, ESPECIALLY AS REGARDS HARMFUL EFFECT ON MODERINIZATION OF MAJOR MATERIEL ITEMS SUCH AS REPLACEMENT OF F-104S. IN THIS CONNECTION CHARGE GAVE RINGNALDA CHAPTER AND VERSE ON SUPERIORITY OF AMERICAN CONTESTANT PLANES OVER FRENCH AND SWEDISH ENTRIES, AND CONFIRMED TO RINGNALDA THAT USG DID ATTACH POLITICAL AS WELL AS MILITARY IMPORTANCE TO SELECTION OF AN AMERICAN REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT.  
TANGUY

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